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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to present a study of the history and development of the New York Public Library. Attention has also been paid to the structure of the Library and it's various Divisions, including the Manuscript Division. However, this paper does not attempt to penetrate deeply into the policy and organization of the Manuscript section, as that is the subject of subsequent reports. (Other papers from this Institute are available as LI 002962-LI 002970 and LI 002972 through LI 002976). (Author)

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[THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY]

By

Susan Sudduth

Papers Prepared for the Institute in Archival Librarianship,
University of Oregon, September 22, 1969 - August 14, 1970

LI 002 971

The New York Public Library

A Report

Susan Suddith
Seminar: Archives
Mr. Duniway
October 28, 1969

Astor wanted a memorial; Lenon a scholar's haven; Tilden a library for the people. The memorial is known to millions the Astor Library could not have reached; scholarship in fields beyond Lenox's range has been fostered; a greater public than Tilden's 1880's could imagine is served.

Franklin F. Hooper

The purpose of this report is to present a study of the history and development of The New York Public Library. Attention has also been paid to the structure of the Library and it's various Divisions, including the Manuscript Division. However, this paper does not attempt to penetrate deeply into the policy and organization of the Manuscript section, as that is the subject of subsequent reports.

The New York Public Library, as it is known to millions today, traces it's roots to the events of nearly a century ago. For it was then that the personalities of a few prominent men shaped the character of a non-existent body into one of the world's most renowned and valuable institutions.

John Jacob Astor was one such man. Born in Germany in 1763, he immigrated to the United States and immediately engaged himself in the fur trade. This occupied his energy for some fifty years and when he retired, his fortune was estimated at nearly twenty-five million dollars. There is great disagreement about his personal qualities. He has been described, on one hand, as a selfish, ruthless, and bold operator, while others have regarded him as benevolent and public spirited.[1] Whatever his characteristics, he was never a collector of books or art objects- or of anything really but money and property. That is, until his life was influenced by a New England teacher, Joseph Green Cogswell. It was Cogswell who persuaded Astor to consider the establishment of a scholarly and public library. Although procrastinating at first, Astor finally agreed to all of Cogswell's requests. When he died in 1848 at the age of eighty-four, Astor left $400,000 to provide for the founding, equipping and carrying on of the Astor Library. Of the total sum, $120,000 was to be spent for books, $75,000 for the building, and the remainder was to be put in the bank. The will also established a Board of Trustees, with Washington Irving as its first President.

The Astor Library opened to the public in 1854; it was the first such library in America to be organized "strictly and severly as a reference library".[2] Cogswell became the Superin-

tendent and his repeated book-buying trips to Europe were very successful. His selection principle was to supply the wants of the community and to make up the deficiencies of the other libraries in the City.[3] "There can be no doubt about the soundness of his knowledge of the books that were fundamental for a great reference collection, about his shrewdness as a buyer, nor about his devotion to the institution that was so largely his own creation."[4]

Practical appreciation of the Astor Library was shown in gifts from the Federal government and from various states. The New York State government at Albany sent extensive selections of public documents; the state legislatures of Maine, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts also forwarded complete sets of their documents.

Although an outstanding institution, the Astor Library suffered from public criticism. The Library lacked the vision of a democratic popular (li. circulating) library. Because the Library was known to "belong" to the Astor family, the public didn't contribute to its support. Unless funds were materially increased, it's opportunities for growth were stunted. "The Astor Library lost it's position as the foremost library in the country, not because the quality of it's collections was lowered, but because it's unchanged attitude kept it out of the main current of library progress."[5] Some years later however, the Astor Library would again be warmly received.

Another New York personality, quite unlike John Jacob Astor, was quietly and unobtrusively collecting some of the worlds' most

valued treasures. He was James Lenox, a wealthy and well-educated man, who retired early from his import business to devote the rest of his life to the management of his property, and to collecting books, paintings, sculpture, and other art objects. "There is ample evidence that Lenox was a preordained book lover and collector, showing amazing wisdom in his purchases."[6] His collection included many famous editions of the Bible, examples of early printing, of Americana, of voyages of discovery, of Shakespeare, Bunyan, and Milton. Notable items were the Gutengerg Bible, Columbus letters, Washington's draft of the Farewell Address, and beautiful illuminated manuscripts.

The creation of a public, though scholarly, library had long been in the mind of Lenox. This became a reality in 1870 when the Lenox Library was incorporated by an act of the New York legistature. Lenox himself was President of the corporation; the Library was guided by a Board of Trustees. The Trustees redeived from Lenox $300,000 in six percent stock of New York county, and in bonds and martgages on City real estate bearing seven percent interest. Of this sum, they set aside $100,000 toward a permanent fund and the remainder into a building fund.[7]

The Library building occupied an entire block on Fifth Avenue from Seventieth to Seventy-First Street. It took seven years to build, opening in 1876. The Trustees stated that the Library was without a peer in the special collections "to which the generous taste and liberal scholarship of its founder devoted his best gifts of intellectual ability and ample resources of fortune."[8] In 1894, the Trustees purchased the working library of George Bancroft; this addition nicely rounded out the

Library's collection pertaining to the discovery, settlement and history of America.

Practical use of the Library was, for eleven years, limited to scholars and special students. The public could only attend art showings and exhibitions of rare books and manuscripts with tickets of admission. As early as 1884, criticism was leveled against the "exclusive" policies of the Library. A Life magazine of January 17, 1884 satirized the Library bitterly, saying that Lenox was afraid his pretty books might be spoiled if read by the public. The Trustees defended themselves by declaring that the Library was int intended to be of the free circulating variety; it was more like a museum and should be respected as such.

Whatever the case, a third influential man was contributing his efforts toward the establishment of a library system in New York City. Samuel Jones Tilden, lawyer and politican, was the Governor of the State of New York and the Democratic candidate in the Hayes-Tilden election of 1876. After his defeat in that highly-debated contest, he retired and collected books. When he died, Tilden established in his will the Tilden Trust, which was created for the purpose of administering the bulk of his estate and for the establishment and maintenance of a free library and reading room in New York City. A suit was brought forth by Tilden's relatives stating that the clauses of the will establishing the Trust were invalid. It is ironic that Tilden, "a lawyer famous in highly complicated litigation, should by his will give cause for a long-drawn-out and celebrated legal contest, and that the clauses establishing the Trust should be invalid by the New York Court of Appeals for 'indefiniteness of subject'".[9]

A settlement was eventually reached, giving $3,000,000 to the heirs, and allowing to the Trust the private library of 20,000 volumes and about $2,000,000. Tilden's library differed substantially from those of either Astor or Lenox. His was the "gentlemans library", but it had extensive collections concerning science and popular education.

"Consolidation was a lively topic in New York in the middle Nineties, when pros and cons on the Greater City were being thrashed out in public assemblies, over bars, and at hearthsides. In the smaller world of libraries, consolidation was also in the air. The catalyst was the homeless Tilden Trust, finally freed from it's legal encumbrances."[10] After the settlement, the Trustees of the Tilden Trust found themselves without sufficient endowment to provide for both a suitable library building and its maintenance. They considered consolidating with other City libraries and narrowed the field down to the Astor and Lenox. Both had been suffering from lack of funds, staff, and public support, and welcomed the opportunity to merge with the Trust. An enabling act was passed, careful documents drawn, and the consolidation became effective on May 23, 1895.

The name of the new corporation was The New York Public Library - Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation; it was to be governed by a board of twenty-five Trustees, including the Mayor and Comptroller of the City, ex oficio. The policies of the three previous corporations became the goal of the newly-formed institution - to establish and maintain a free circulating library. Dr. John Billings became the Director; he had previous experience as the creator of the Surgeon General's Library in

Washington, D.C. and was well qualified for his new position. It was during his administration that the branch policy and physical and bibliothecal development were worked out and the organization of the Library determined.[11]

While the Public Library was being formed, other library activities were emerging in the City. Until the New York Free Circulating Library was established, New York was one of the largest cities in the United States without an adequate system of circulating libraries. Certain neighborhood efforts had produced small and independent "branches", such as the Harlem and Washington Heights Libraries. But the first real effort at developing a system of public circulating libraries occurred in 1880 when the teachers in a Grace Church sewing class donated books for their pupils' use. That small beginning was eventually incorporated into the New York Free Circulating Library. The incorporation was made under an 1848 act which established benevolent, charitable, missionary and scientific societies and allowed them to accept gifts of land. An act passed in 1886 granted permission to local authorities to aid free circulating libraries by appropriating funds for the establishment of such libraries. Various gifts, including one from George Vanderbilt, allowed the Free Circulating Library to expand by 1899 from two rooms to eleven branches, with a combined circulation of some 1,600,000 volumes.

While there was little uniformity to these libraries, their constant use was indicative of the need for a real library system in the City. The New York Times of January 13, 1884 stressed the point:

> New York should have a free public library like Boston's...Ultimately we shall have such a library and it will be supported in part, by an annual appropriation of the taxpayers money. If the wealthy philanthropists of New York can be persuaded to liberally endow this promising library, to maintain it's steady yearly growth, and to help it forward, we think the good sense of even this badly-governed city can be trusted to extend that substantial public encouragement without which no great free library can be sustained.[12]

Thus, between the years 1901 and 1904, the various branches of the Free Circulating Library merged with The New York Public Library to satisfy the needs of the City. The branches became the basis of the Circulation Department, which was (and is) supported by funds from the City. The Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundation, which for five years had acted as the whole Public Library, became the Reference Department, and was (and is) supported by funds from the various endowments.

The Library had been operating out of the old Astor and Lenox buildings, but a new location was necessart to anticipate future growth and development. The Trustees proposed to Mayor William Strong that the City make available the site then occupied by the Croton Reservoir and to construct on it at public expense a library building, dignified, and fireporrf. These requests were granted in a formal "Lease and GAgreement" concluded between the Trustees and the City in 1897. The City agreed to equip and build the Central Building; the Trustees agreed to establish a public library and to provide for its maintenance.

The Central Building opened in 1911, at a cost of over $9,000,000. The problem of expansion was solved in 1901 when Andrew Carnegie offered $5,200,000 for the construction of

branch libraries. In writing to Director Billings, Carnegie candidly stated, "I should deem it a rare priviledge to furnish the money as needed. Sixty-five libraries at one stroke probably breaks the record, but this is the day of big operations and New York is soon to be the biggest of cities."[13] Over a period of many years, the City purchased land for the location of branch libraries and eventually thirty-nine were built from Carnegie's gift. Being a part of the Circulation Department, they were (and are) supported by public funds.

During the administration of Dr. Billings, the Library adopted the basic structure by which it is now known. When the Central Building opened, not only was there a main Reading Room, as long as a city block accomodating 700 people, but various departments or "Divisions" appeared, financed by private funds. The special collections of Astor and Lenox became the basis for the American History, Art and Architecture, and Rare Book Divisions; Tilden's collection of scientific materials was the beginning of the Science and Technology Division.

Through the years, each of the Library's Divisions has contributed to the uniqueness of the entire institution. Certain fields, such as law, medicine, and education, were not particularily pursued, being the specialities of ot er libraries in the City. In order to understand the whole library, it is necessary to look briefly at each Division and it's specialities.

The largest Division, with over a million volumes, is that of Economics and Sociology. It's subject matter ranges from the staid (li. banking, insurance, civil service) to those not so staid (li. labor, woman's suffrage, crime). The Division has a

large collection of materials covering forms of government and political theories; the highlight of the department is a collection of gazettes from every country in the world.

The Division of Science and Technology has half a million volumes and boasts subscription to over 4000 periodicals, adding approximately twenty new ones each month. This Division has a collection of patents second only to that of the United States Patent Office. The American History Division specializes in the pre-history and history of the New World. This section is heavily relied upon by scholars who may also consult the collection of postcards, slikes, pamphlets, catalogues, and overland journey accounts. The Theatre Collection includes materials not only pertaining to drama, but movies, television, radio, vaudeville, the circus, fairs, magazines, minstrel shows, and night clubs. The Division has more than a million playbills, dating from 1750.

The Music Division is one of the largest in the Library, with 165,000 volumes. This research center for musicians and musicologists has 150,000 pieces of sheet music, 70,000 records and old record recort catalogues, 8,000 pieces of music written in America before 1800, and it's own Rare Book Room. Part of the research collection of the Music Division is now in the Toscanini Memorial Archives at the new Lincoln Center. It is devoted to the history of music, in tribute to Toscanini's retirement from the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

The Slavonic Division has 180,000 volumes, half in the Russian language. The Russian material is especially rich in

literature, first editions, and rare books. The Division collects government publications, political documents, and scientific journals from behind the Iron Curtain. The Oriental Collection subscribes to 1000 periodicals and has a library of 70,000 books, primarily in the many Oriental languages. A speciality of this Division is it's collection of Arabic medical books of the Thirteenth Century. The Jewish Division is one of the third largest in the world. It represents an archive of scholarly work done by and about Jews. The Division has over 1000 books from the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries.

The Rare Book Division acts as a supplement to most of the other Divisions, for it collects in every area of knowledge. It has over 80,000 rare editions and is regarded as important for research as well as for aesthetic reasons. The Art and Architecture Division was the nucleus of Astor's Library. Karl Kup, Division Chief, says that "coverage is so extraordinary that the Astors must have bought whole bookshops and collections and since 1911, the Library has continued to buy liberally, placing emphasis on scholarly work."15

The Print Room was the first of its kind ever established in a public library. It contains 125,000 prints and 10,000 reference books and pamphlets. The duty of this department is collect and exhibit fine materials. The selection policy is guided by what will be considered great in the future. The Division has prints by many famous artists who at one time were considered without talent.

The Map Room has some 4500 atlases and over 250,000 maps.

This room was in constant use by military strategists during World Wars I and II. The Picture Collection contains several million pictures that have appeared in print. Each picture is "sourced", indicating from what magazien or pamphlet it was clipped. The Picture Collection is unique in that it is the only Division of the Reference Department that allows it's contents to circulate.

Last to be briefly sketched is the Manuscript Division. With over nine million pieces, it occupies 15,000 linear feet of shelving. Handwriting, rather than printed type, has been the basis for inclusion, but "no format is too strange if man has inscribed his message directly on it"[16] Thus the Division holds several hundred Babylonian clay tablets as well as Twentieth Century materials. Because the Founders of the Library were keenly interested in the discovery and settlement of the Americas, there are strong holdings on Latin American areas prior to their wars of independence. This is also true for North America, with especially rich holdings in colonial, Revolutionary, and early Federalist periods. The current policy of the Division is to collect manuscripts relating to the State and local history of New York.

Three special collections of The New York Public Library also contain manuscript material. These include the George Arents Collection on the History of Tobacco, the Berg Collection, of English and American Literature, and the William Spencer Collection of Books Finely Bound and Illustrated. The Arents Collection supplements it's printed rarieties with manuscripts

signed by Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century public figures of Europe who were connected with the production and use of tobacco, and by many significant American personalities. The Berg Collection has 65,000 items, with author's manuscripts, corrected proofs, and family correspondence of famous English and American literary figures. The Spencer Collection was a bequest of William Spencer, it's purpose to "obtain the finest illustrated books in fine bindings that can be procured of any country and in any language."[17] A collection like this allows the Library the luxury of buying beautiful books that it otherwise could not afford. Each of these collections is supported by it's own endowment fund, and is technically not a part of the Reference Department.

The Manuscript Division, with the aid of the other Divisions, make up the Reference Department of the Library. This Department is used by hundreds of thousands of people yearly, not only in person, but by phone and letter requests. The essence of the selection policy of the Library is to present all sides of any issue, be it badly or brilliantly written. "It does not hide the ugly or censor the injurious. These guarentees are woven into each division."[18]

Everything is collected at the Library with the idea that it will become historical. A true scope of this philosophy may be measured by seeing what the current Director, Edward Freehafer, has chosen as the "Ten Wonders of The New York Public Library". They were selected for their unique character and the importance of their effect on the world, at the time of their origin and

today. They include: (1) Ticknell Psalter, 1303-1314 (2) Gutenberg Bible (3) Christopher Columbus's first announcement in printing of the discovery of the New World (4) 1605 first edition of Don Quixote (5) Bay Psalm Book, 1640 - the first book printed in the United States (6) one of five drafts made by Jefferson in 1776 of the Declaration of Independence (7) Bill of Rights (8) George Washington's final version of his Farewell Address (9) Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass and (10) Lenox Glove - earliest globe to show land in the Western Hemisphere.[19]

The Library operates on the belief that free men will find the truth, however devious the route by which they may approach it. It is certain Astor, Lenox, and Tilden never dreamed that their individual efforts would result in a public library so dedicated to that goal. But it is to their credit that dreams did exist. The people of New York will never forget the ideals of those Founders; it is a living reminder in The New York Public Library.

Footnotes

1 Hooper, Franklin F., "Three Men-Their Intellectual Contribution to America", Newcomen Address, Feb. 16, 1944.

2 Ibid., p. 11

3 Lydenberg, H.M., "The History of The New York Public Library", New York Public Library Bulletin, v. 20, p. 558

4 Hooper, loc. cit.

5 Lydenberg, op. cit. , p. 573

6 Hooper, op. cit., p. 12

7 Lydenberg, op. cit., p. 692.

8 Idem.

9 Hooper, op. cit., p. 16

10 New York Public Library, After One Hundred Years, New York: N.Y.P.L. 1948, p. 14

11 Dain, Phyllis, "The New York Public Library-A History of it's Founding and Early Years", Dissertation Abstracts, v. 27A, p. 1183

12 Lydenberg, op. cit., p. 25

13 Ibid., p. 27

14 "Toscanini Memorial Archives", Library Journal, v. 91, Feb., 1966, p. 656

15 Zinsser, William K., Search and Research: The Collections and Uses of The New York Public Library, New York: N.Y.P.L. 1961, p. 24

16 Ibid, p. 26

17 Idem.

18 Ibid, p. 27

19 "Ten Wonders of The New York Public Library", Library Journal, v. 92, Mar., 1967, p. 529

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Administration and Organization of Manuscripts in The New York Public Library and Other Institutions

Susan Sudduth
Archives Seminar
Mr. Duniway

Note

The original purpose of this paper was to examine the administration and organization of manuscripts in The New York Public Library. However as information was very sketchy concerning the Library, it was necessary to expand the paper to include other learned institutions which collect manuscripts and, most importantly, publish information about their policies. Both public and private libraries are represented.

The subject of administration and organization of manuscripts cannot be examined without first understanding the nature of manuscripts themselves. Manuscripts are usually the product of a spontaneous expression of thought or emotion. Archives, on the contrary, grow out of a regular functional activity. Manuscripts are subject to human biases. They are unorganic; they do not grow out of one particular activity. An exception to this is if they take the form of a complete collection of family papers. Manuscripts vary in form. Letters are the most obvious example, whether handwritten or typed. "Manuscripts are unique. As such they are the last, best resource of scholars".[1]

The purpose of any manuscript department, public or private, is to collect and preserve materials and to make them available for use. Administrative policies, whether established by the Board of Trustees, the Director, or the Curator of Manuscripts of an institution, should have this goal in mind.

The New York Public Library is governed by a Board of twenty-five Trustees[2], a Director, and a Deputy Director. Individual divisions, guided by their respective Chiefs, are fairly autonomous. Mr. Victor Hugo Paltsits was influential in the policy-making decisions of the administration of manuscripts in The New York Public Library. He saw the formation of a separate Manuscripts Division rise from the Astor and Lenox collections. As Keeper of Manuscripts, he supervised

the acquisitions and collecting policies of the manuscripts section.

The John Carter Brown Library in Providence, Rhode Island, is under the direct charge of a Committee of Management appointed by the Corporation of Brown University. The Library was a gift of John Carter Brown's son to Brown University in 1901. It's Americana collections are confined principally to printed materials "which are sources that achieved wide distribution through contemporary publication rather than manuscripts which usually were addressed to a limited audience."[3]

In 1959, the Committee of Management adopted a "Policy of Future Growth"; this merely reaffirmed the fundamental collecting policy of the Library - to concentrate on printed rather than manuscript materials. The manuscripts in the J.C. Brown Library are under the custody of the Librarian.

The Clements Library at the University of Michigan is unique. It represents a private library turned to general scholarly use during the lifetime of its donor.[4] Although the Library was a private gift, it is maintained largely through public funds. The Library is administered by the Board of Trustees, the Director, and a staff of five professionals. The three divisions - books, manuscripts, and maps and prints - are in the charge of librarian-curators.

Unlike the John Carter Brown Library, the Clements Library is dedicated to the philosophy which assumes that the "most valid testimony from past ages is the sort found in

personalutterances, in writ-by-hands, in manuscripts".[5] The creation of the central manuscript collection "was a happy circumstance in which the right man with the right bankrole was encouraged to take advantage of temporary market conditions for the sake of permanent institutionalization. Here the importance of University ties cannot be overstated: the initial book collection might have existed without them, the manuscript collection never."[6]

The Washington State Library traces it's roots to 1853 when Congress appropriated $5000 for the purchase of books in the Territory of Washington's first library. At first the functions of the State Library were that of a law library and a general reference collection for use by state officials. In 1890, when a separate law library was established, the State Library turned it's services to groups and organizations in need of reference materials. They also continued their policy of aiding officials in their administrative duties. Since 1941, the Library has been governed by a Committee of five members. Four are appointed by the Governor for a four year term. The fifth member, and ex oficio chairman of the Committee, is by law the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.[7]

The Washington State Library is not a major manuscript collecting agency. "It has never attempted to collect original material that properly belongs in another state agency. The exception to this policy has been if an individual possesses such materials and wishes to pass them only to the State Library".[8]

"A basic responsibility of the State Library is the collection, preserving, and servicing of materials relating to the state, its people, and its history, and working with other libraries and historical societies in the collection and preservation of local and state historical materials."[9]

The Sutro Library agrees with the above statement yet has a different policy than has the Washington State Library. Originally the collection of Adolph Sutro, it was one of the largest private libraries in the world. Unfortunately more than half of his collection was destroyed by the San Francisco fire and earthquake of 1906. But the core of the Library when it was presented to the State of California in 1913, was its manuscript and rare book collection. Even though the Library is part of the State Library system, the manuscript policy of the Library has remained the same: to actively collect and preserve manuscripts and other rare materials relating to the subject areas in which the Library specializes.

The Sutro Branch is the pro perty of the State of California.

> That ownership was acquired through a process that renders its position fiduciary. The claims of Sutro Library for court support might be based upon cogent legal arguements. Because of the fiduciary nature of the state's relation, it appears that moral arguements more adequately chart the course that leads to justice than any legal ones that micht be presented. The obligation to continue the Library, legally and morally, the State accepts.[10]

Libraries are organized on a functional basis. Archives ideally are organized according to subject matter.[11] The or-

ganization of manuscripts also follows functional lines. This varies considerably with the content and scope of each library's collections.

The original interests of the Founders of The New York Public Library served as a guide for the Manuscript Division Keepers since the formation of the Library in 1895. Because Astor and Lenox had keen interest in the discovery and settlement of the Americas, there are strong holdings on Latin American areas prior to their Wars of Independence and in the Colonial, Revolutionary, and Federalist periods of North American history. As the collections for these periods became more well-rounded, the Manuscript Division increasingly turned toward the collection of materials relating to the state and local history of New York.

Initially, collections were individually catalogued. The first effort to present a complete record of the Library's manuscripts appeared in the Bulletin in 1901. When holdings were assembled physically in 1914, a copy of the 1901 "group list" was cut up, each entry pasted on a card, and the catalogue was bagun. The classes and headings within the list also provided the basis for the shelf list which has followed to the present time.[12]

Currently the Manuscript Division is processing it's materials in an inventory or shelf list fashion "rather than to subject analysis and the creation of many cards."[13] This reflects a tendency to let the scholar who uses the manuscripts

analyze and weigh the importance of a collection's content.

The John Carter Brown Library collects journals, diaries, and sailing directions which relate to early American history. The Library conceives of early American history as the era when England and America were one. Their collecting stops at the end of the Eighteenth Century. "The Library does not attempt to collect archival material, that is, autograph letters or the papers of individuals."[14]

The manuscript catalogue in the John Carter Brown Library treats books in manuscript in essentially the same way as printed books are treated. That is, each has a main entry card and a set of subject cards. A set of these cards is also filed in the dictionary book catalogue. Archival manuscripts, such as the Brown family papers, are treated in the manuscript catalogue only.[15]

The Clements Library contained few manuscripts when it was offered to the University in 1921. The collection was no sooner institutionalized than it broadened. In 1953, the Library Committee on Management decided to concentrate on special strengths and therefore on the purchase of items dated before 1830. "The Committee also announced agreements with The General Library and the Michigan Historical Collection through which materials were exhcanged in order to establish clearer boundaries of interest."[16] Six general categories reflect the current scope of the Library: Exploration and Discovery; Settlement and Colonial Wars; Revolution; Federalism; Develop-

opment of the Old West; the War of 1812.

The manuscript collections are individually catalogued by date, as well as by writer and recipient. There are three separate arrangements under the writer: author, addressee, and subject. Bibliographic services are also provided "not only within but between the Divisions, so that the researcher is helped to find his way past manuscripts to books, newspapers, maps, prints - anything related to his subject of interest."[17]

The Washington Room of the Washington State Library houses manuscripts relating to the history of the Pacific Northwest. The collection includes records and correspondence of the territorial period, interviews of Washington pioneers, autobiographical sketches, letters, and some book manuscripts of Washington authors. Microfilm copies of original manuscripts belonging to individual or other libraries augment the manuscript collection. The Library has purchased practically all of the microfilm produced by the National Archives relating to Washington.[18]

The Washington Room staff is currently indixing its manuscript collection and will eventually have a complete manuscript catalogue, not only to the originals, but to the microfilm collections as well.

The Sutro Library is strong in such fields as history, early science, voyages and travels, ans religion. It has been nicknames "the miniature Huntington" for its collections are similar in nature even though the Huntington is a private library and the Sutro is public. "A full-fledged partner of

its mother institution - the California State Library - in the field of library extension, most of its volumes circulate on interlibrary loan to public, county, college, university, and special libraries."[19]

Since 1917, work has gone on to catalogue the collections completely. The Sir Joseph Banks manuscript collection of 200,000 pieces on science and politics is in the process of being intensively catalogued.[20]

"Four decades of cataloguing paid off as the collections became better known as a result of a combination of bibliographic control and publicity. Inddequately housed in four separate locations in the San Francisco Public Library, better quarters at the University of San Francisco have made the Sutro Library a more effective place for reference, research, and interlibrary loan."[21]

Researchers benefit from efficient cataloguing and classification systems which make the manuscript materials useable. Although the process may differ from a large public library such as the New York Public Library to a small, select collection such as is found at the Clements or Sutro Libraries, useability has been the primary objective of the organization of a manuscript department.

Footnotes

1 University of Michigan, Office of Research Administration, "Three University Libraries", vol. 15, 1965, p. 5

2 Explanatory note: some criticism has been levied against the Trustees of The New York Public Library, suggesting that they are a reactionary group of wealthy financiers who do not represent the people of New York City. Henderson, H.P., "Private Life of the Public Library", New Masses, vol. 31, June 6, 1939, p. 126

3 John Carter Brown Library, Annual Report of the Librarian, Antiquarian Bookman, vol. 31, Jan. 21, 1963, p. 207

4 Whitehill, Walter M., Independent Historical Societies, 1962, p. 437

5 University of Michigan, op. cit., p. 2

6 Ibid., p. 4

7 Puget Soundings, "Washington State Library", p. 3

8 Mills, Hazel E., "Pacific Northwest History Collection of Washington State Library", Library News Bulletin, vol. 33, July 1966, p. 187

9 Idem.

10 Commy, Peter T., "The Sutro Library: Origin, Nature, and Status", California Librarian, vol. 20, Apr. 1959, p. 74

11 Schellenberg, T.R., Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 127

12 New York Public Library, Research Library, Dictionary Catalogue of the Manuscript Division, Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1967, p. 2

13 Idem.

14 Brown University, Opportunities for Research in the John Carter Brown Library, Providence: Brown University, 1968, p. 51

15 Ibid., p. 71

16 University of Michigan, op. cit., p. 2

17 Ibid., p. 4

18 Mills, op. cit., p. 189

19 Dillon, Richard H., "Sutro Library is Forty", Wilson

Library Bulletin, vol. 31, Jan. 1957, p. 93

20 Idem.

21 Idem.

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Reference Services in The New York Public Library and Other Institutions

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Archives Seminar
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The purpose of this paper is to examine the reference services of a Manuscripts Division. The manuscript policies of The New York Public Library are stressed. The policies and practices of other libraries - private, public, and state - are included for comparison.

The purpose of a Manuscript Division is to collect and preserve materials and to make them available for use. Everything a Curator of Manuscripts does must reflect this dual objective. Manuscripts are collected for a particular purpose. The Curator has in mind the needs and goals of his library before he purchases a manuscript. Once acquired, a manuscript is described "in finding aids so that its content and character will be made known."[1] This latter point is as important as the purchase of the manuscript itself. "The best way to prevent a researcher from reaching material is either not to catalog it or to catalog it so ineptly that it cannot be found."[2]

A Curator is concerned not only with the physical well-being of his manuscripts, but also with the purpose for which they are to be consulted. The manuscripts in a public library must, in theory, be available to anyone with "serious intent". In reality, this is a different story. The New York Public Library's Manuscript Division was established for the purpose of reference and research. Its materials are available only to persons over eighteen who have a written recommendation from a person of known position.[3] The Denver Public Library allows its manuscripts to be examined "for acceptable purposes to properly accredited persons."[4] Manuscripts can be studied only upon an application to the Librarian.

"A state-supported library must open it's doors to insistent taxpayers."[5] The William Henry Smith Memorial Library of the Indiana Historical Society is open to use by a qualified person. "Generally this means adults or at least high school students and includes persons doing research along

various lines."[6] The Sutro Library, a member of the California State Library family, allows "all persons interested i books and history"[7] to explore their vast geneological section. Local patrons are allowed to borrow most of the geneological books for home use. At the Washington State Library all are welcome to use the facilities in person or through interlibrary loan.

Private libraries have the widest range of policies regarding restriction in the use of manuscripts. The Clements Library is a private library maintained largely through public funds. Yet the donor stated that users of the books and manuscripts were to be scholars and not the lay public. As a research library, they have a policy of existance for advanced research only. They do not encourage readers to begin their research there. "They should begin in a public or college library with the secondary works and then move back toward the primary sources. When they come to us, we consider them to be fairly well informed on their subject."[8]

The Newberry Library recently initiated a new restrictive policy. Located in the heart of Chicago, students were drawn from forty-five colleges to use the facilities. "Undergraduates were finding it an unusual and interesting place to meet and the library appeared to be in danger of becoming as popular as the Florida Coast."[9] Books and periodicals were being mutiliated at an alarming rate. A plan of restriction was adopted. An Admissions Secretary interviewed all pro-

spective readers, explained the use of the library and its collection and issued cards for those eligible for admission. This was a successful attempt to preserve the library's collection and to limit it's use to advanced scholars.

Anyone who needs to use the John Carter Brown Library may do so. Neither the rare books nor reference books circulate. However if the latter are needed by readers who "wish to work in other Brown Libraries in the evenings or during vacations and holidays when the J.C. Brown Library is closed, arrangements may be made to have them accessible."10

Often there are restrictions as to when manuscripts are accessable. Donors may put a time limit on their gift. This could range from the life of the donor to a period of one-hundred years. A writer or statesman might destroy his papers rather than have his private letters immediately read. A Curator's suggestion that the donor's papers be closed for a fixed time might encourage him to make them available for use. These arrangements may originate with the donor or the Curator "for despite the legal ruling that once a donor has accepted a tax deduction he can no longer put restrictions on the use of his manuscript - they must be an outright gift - the Curator can impose such restrictions if he so chooses."11 He has to balance the claims of privacy and research. Privacy for fifty years may vex today's scholars, but at least the papers will be preserved rather than destroyed. They will be of use to the scholar of tomorrow.

A further distinction can be made between those papers that are closed to research altogether and those which are open but whose contents cannot be published for a stated time. No notes or copying may be made from this type of document. A test case in 1960 proved that a library could enforce such a condition. Approximately thirty years ago The New York Public Library received the letters of John Quinn, a patron of writers and artists, on the condition that the letters were not to be published before 1988. The Library accepted the donation on that term. In the late fifties, Mr. Peter Kavanagh was admitted to the Manuscript Division to see the letters but was not allowed to copy them or take notes. "Determined to publish them, he memorized their content, working on them for an hour at a time and then leaving the building to make notes."[12] Kavanagh was an amateur printer. In defiance of the non-publication order of the library, he brought out his own edition of Quinn's letters. The Library sued Kavanagh in the New York Supreme Court in 1960. The judge ordered him to tear up 117 copies of his book, leaving half of each copy with the court. He was allowed to keep two copies for his personal use, but could not dispose of them or exhibit them to anyone without the consent of the Library. This episode demonstrates how seriously the donor's restrictions must be taken.

The policies regarding the use of manuscripts differ little between public, state or private libraries. Anywhere a Curator of Manuscripts must render the widest possible service on

holdings while insuring their preservation. A report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Manuscripts in 1948 by the American Historical Association lists five rules for the reference use of manuscripts: 1. Use no ink 2. Refrain from marking the manuscripts and writing notes on the top of manuscripts 3. Preserve the existing order of manuscripts in their volumes or containers and report to the reading room attendent manuscripts apparently misplaced 4. Exercise care in preventing damage to manuscripts and extreme care in handling fragile material 5. Obtain, before publication of, or from manuscripts, knowledge of the libel law and of literary property rights of common law.[13]

In the Manuscript Division of The New York Public Library, similar rules aim to preserve the materials. Cards of admission are required for admission to the Reading Room. A card is personal and admits only one person. "No person will be admitted for the purpose of preparing for examinations, of writing prize essays, or of competing for prizes."[14] In applying for manuscripts, a separate ticket is written and signed by the applicant for each piece desired. A record of this is kept in an official register. Tracing on the manuscripts is not allowed. Permission is never given to trace from illuminations or paintings. Manuscripts or other articles belonging to the Manuscript Division cannot be removed from the Division to other departments unless by the specific permission of the Keeper of Manuscripts.

Similarily in state and private libraries, Curators of Manuscripts should observe certain procedures in dealing with readers. Readers should be required to establish and prove

their identity. Too often manuscripts have been stolen because this simple rule was not followed. "Readers should be warned of the penalties for theft or damage to public property."[15] Curators of Manuscripts "have an obligation to maintain a record of the scholars who have consulted an item. Researchers are entitled to know who has worked on specific material."[17]

Readers should acknowledge in writing the receipt of manuscripts delivered to them. This insures an accountability of them. A Curator "is quite within his rights in requiring prospective users to sign for the documents they receive, for he is responsible for their preservation, and some of them may have great monetary value."[18]

Readers should be familiar with the rules governing the use of manuscripts. No scholar will object to the few basic rules designed to safeguard the holdings of a Manuscript Division.

Part of the reference function of any Manuscript Division is to furnish reproductions of their records. A fundamental assumption is that an institution developes a manuscript collection as a means of furthering knowledge through research. "This aim is fulfilled in direct ratio to the amount of research and publication based on an institutions holdings. It follows that if the scope and range of research can be extended by disemenating photocopies of original sources, the service to scholarship will be expanded."[19]

Public, state, and private libraries aim to serve the

needs of scholarship. But usually they have some restrictions on the photocopying of their manuscripts. The New York Public Library's Keeper of Manuscripts is authorized to determine what may be reproduced. He permits the photocopying on the condition that the Library be given a copy of the book or other publication in which the original appears. The Library in no way surrenders its right to print or give others permission to print any of its materials.

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library will xerox copies on request to enquirers by mail "except for the Huck Finn manuscript for which microfilms may be purchased from a commercial firm from our negative."[20] Because of the structure of common law regarding the right to publish, the Indiana State Library has developed a rule typical of most libraries with manuscript departments. "Photoreproduction of unpublished manuscripts written during the past fifty years is not ordinarily undertaken unless the owners of the literary rights therein have given specific permission or have dedicated their rights to the public."[21]

The John Carter Brown Library has all conventional methods of reproduction available. They cannot honor large scale orders from libraries or other institutions "which are endeavoring to build a collection of reproductions unconnected with an immediate and concrete scholarly project."[22]

Historians benefit from the services of photocopying. They rely upon the depositories and no depository claims to be self-sufficient. "The most significant advance that

archivists, librarians, and historians could make together would be to liberalize access to manuscript collections through photocopying."[23]

Manuscripts Departments must provide information about their records, as distinguished from making the records themselves or copies of them available for use. The meaning of reference service would be incomplete if this service were ignored. "Every researcher of experience considers the able archivist as an associate."[24] The Curator has an obligation to inform a scholar known to be working on a special subject "that one collection contains important relevant materials."[25] If a Curator is convinced that he has significant unpublished material, he should induce scholars to work upon it."[26]

Most public, state, and private libraries supplement their primary sources with secondary ones. Although primary sources are reports of immediate happenings, they cannot always be accepted at face value.[27] Secondary sources are essential to round out personal points of view. It is important to assemble data on the economic, legal, social, and intellectual aspects of a question. "Persons using the library will find its books set among congenial companions which suggest insights and points of view leading to fresh understandings."[28]

The New York Public Library will, in time, answer mail requests for information about their manuscript holdings. Other institutions also fulfill this reference service. At the Indiana State Library, Manuscript Section, reference work must be limited as to the amount of research they can do for

any one request by mail. "We do have a catalog of names and subjects that we check and will search a collection if the writer is specific as to month and year."[29]

The Librarian and Research Consultant of the Washington Room at the Washington State Library furnishes reference and research aid and service to those who wish to be helped, whether in person or by mail. "We use both our manuscript collection and our manuscript material on microfilm in addition to our published materials when we are answering reference and research questions."[30] The John Carter Brown Library offers information not only about it's rare books and manuscripts, but also about any supplementary materials available in the other Brown University libraries.

The Clements Library is an exception to the "helpfulness rule". "Occasionally we hear from investigators who can't get to Ann Arbor and want to know what we have on their particular topic. We simply reply that we are unable to do any research for them."[31] They will make photocopies only for specific requests. On the other hand, when readers at the Clements Library are interviewed, they are aided by suggestions of relevant materials. "Since our books, manuscripts, newspapers, and maps are fairly well integrated, we can suggest to the book reader that he will look into certain manuscripts collections and vice versa."[32] The Director of the Library feels that by the time a scholar reaches the Clements, he should know more about his subject than any staff member.[33]

The Curator of Manuscripts then fulfills his dual ob-

jective. He preserves his manuscripts through reasonable rules for use. He makes them available to qualified persons by providing the originals, suggesting relevant secondary sources, allowing photocopies, and supplying other valuable information.

> The archivist's (Curator's) job at all times is to preserve the evidence, impartially, without taint of political or ideological bias, so that on the basis of this evidence those judgments may by pronounced upon men and events by posterity which historians through human failings are momentarily incapable of pronouncing. Archivists are thus the guardians of the truth, or at least, of the evidence on the basis of which truth can be established.[34]

Footnotes

1 Schellenberg, T.R. Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 224

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4 Barnes, K.D., Special Collections Librarian, Denver Public Library, letter, Nov. 19, 1969

5 Preston, Jean. "Problems in the Use of Manuscripts", American Archivist, vol. 28, July 1965, p. 368

6 Ibid., p. 369

7 Sutro Library. Through the Centuries. San Francisco: California State Printing Office, 1957, p. 19

8 Peckham, Howard H., Director, Clements Library, letter, Nov. 17, 1969

9 Graham, Kathryn M. "Finding an Admission Policy for the Newberry Library", Illinois Libraries, vol. 46, Sept. 1964, p. 612

10 Brown University. Opportunities for Research in the John Carter Brown Library. Providence: Brown University. 1968, p. 76

11 Preston, op. cit., p. 370

12 Idem.

13 Land, Robert H. "Defense of Archives Against Human Foes", American Archivist, vol. 19, Jan. 1956, p. 420

14 Paltsits, op. cit., p. 5

15 Land, op. cit., p. 421

16 Macdonald, Frances B., Manuscript Librarian, Indiana Division, Indiana State Library, letter, Nov. 18, 1969

17 Parker, Wyman. "How Can the Archivist Aid the Researcher", American Archivist, vol. 16, July 1953, p. 233

18 Schellenberg, op. cit., p. 232

19 Rundell, Walter J. "To Serve Scholarship", American Archivist, vol. 29, Apr. 1966, p. 547

20 Van Arsdale, Jane D., Curator, Rare Book Room, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, letter, Nov. 18, 1969

[21] Macdonald, loc. cit.

[22] Brown University, op. cit., p. 75

[23] Rundell, op. cit., p. 548

[24] Jordan, op. cit., p. 59

[25] Parker, op. cit., p. 234

[26] Ibid, p. 235

[27] University of Michigan, "Three University Libraries", Office of Research Administration, vol. 15, 1965, p. 4

[28] Brown University, op. cit., p. 8

[29] Macdonald, loc. cit.

[30] Mills, Hazel E., Research Consultant and Librarian, Washington Room, Washington State Library, letter, Nov. 25, 1969

[31] Peckham, loc. cit.

[32] Idem.

[33] Idem.

[34] Schellenberg, op. cit., p. 236

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